



---

# Socio-Economic Status And Pattern Of Education Among Muslims In India: A Situational Analysis

**Sadik Bagwan** Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology Dr.Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad (MH). India.

---

**Abstract:** The research paper aims to explore the pattern of education and employment of Muslims in India. Various government committees and research by independent scholars have repeatedly pointed the backwardness of Muslims on majority of indicators of human development. It is general consensus among scholars and policy makers that Muslims in India are even more backward as compared to SCs and STs. The lower socio-economic status is reflected in high level of poverty, malnutrition, lower education levels and employment in informal sector on subsistence wages. Financial constraint along with familial responsibility is the main reasons that keep Muslim childrens away from education. The enrolment of Muslims as compared to other communities decreases as the level of education rises. This paper discusses the underlying reasons for the present socio-economic conditions of Muslims. The paper tries to figure out the pattern of education among Muslims and its impact on employment opportunities for the community.

**Keywords:** Backwardness, Employment, Enrolment, Poverty, Subsistence.

## Introduction:

India encompasses a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi- ethnic society within a democratic frame of policy making. People belonging to many religions live in this country since times immemorial. There also appear substantial differences in socio economic and demographic profiles of major religious communities in India, mainly resulting from socio cultural and historical reasons (Sharif and Azam 2004). Muslims constitute the second largest religious group in India and thus the largest minority. The Census of 2011 enumerated India's Muslim population at over 17.18 crore (approximately 14.2%). The Muslims in India resides across the country and their concentration varies substantially from one state to another. There is widely held belief that Muslims have remained largely unaffected by the process of economic development and social change, that have been taking place in independent India and their general economic condition has been deteriorating progressively (Ahmad 1981). This decline is clearly visible by identifying the job profiles of Muslims, their education levels and general well-being. The low income levels and poor economic capability has affected the community by and large.

## **Understanding Socio-Economic Status of Muslims:**

The Muslims today find themselves at lowest rung of socio-economic ladder amongst all the communities in the country. The Sachar Committee (2006) corroborated the finding of different committees and independent scholars about backwardness of Indian Muslims on varied indicators viz. education, employment, poverty, representation in higher education and government services, access to banking etc. It is essential to understand that like other minorities, issues faced by Muslims are multifaceted as they simultaneously face problems relating to security, identity and equity. And the interplay of these dimensions is at the core of the socio economic and political processes that the community is exposed to on a daily basis (Basant and Sharif 2010). Hence, there are certain things which have compelled the community to go one way than other. The ghettoisation of Muslims, identification of their areas for singling out and being indifferent to their demands and appeals has in certain ways compounded the Muslim problem. The interlinking of various problems of the community has brought it to a place, where it finds itself today.

The conditions in which the Muslims find themselves have become peculiar characteristic of the community in the post independence era. The dire situation in which the Muslims find themselves is a combination of several factors, both at the societal and institutional level, and at the community level too. The low opportunities for education and employment are the root cause for dire conditions in which the Muslim community finds itself today. Muslims in India have a poor human development status. Widespread illiteracy, low income, irregular employment implying thereby a high incidence of poverty is all pervasive among Muslims (Zakaria 2004). The level of poverty among the Muslims is one of the highest as compared to other communities. The impact of poverty on health, hygiene, education, employment and status of women are manifold thereby further accentuating their deprivation levels. And with time this problems are increasing manifold for the community. The pushing of Muslims in community ghettos has become a peculiar feature of urban India. These ghettos are devoid of any basic facilities provided by local administration or marked as red zones by banks for credit distribution and their stereotyping makes them a world in themselves. These community ghettos are having a peculiar type of attitude, mindset and perspective of looking at thing which is regressive and negative in outlook affecting the very psyche of inhabitants of ghettos. Poverty is traceable to the vicious circle of poverty i.e. low level of income generates low level of savings, which in turn keeps the level of investment low. Low level of investment yields low level of income and thus the circle is completed . Indian Muslims have fallen in the vicious circle of poverty- depression-frustration- educational backwardness and isolation (Hasan 1997).

As per the NSSO 68 th (2011-12) round 35.1 per cent Muslims lived in urban areas as against 28.6 per cent of general population. An analysis of recent trends in the distribution of

population across socio-religious categories into rural areas, metro cities and other urban towns indicate that a high proportion of Muslim population reside in metro cities or other urban areas as compared to other religious groups. This is due to historical reasons – concentration of Muslims in seats of governance, large cities and towns (Kundu 2013). However, the percentage of increase in urban share of Muslims is very low reflecting exclusionary urbanization. This reflects social factors constraining their mobility, particularly in smaller urban centres (Kundu 2013). The urban living of Muslims is poverty led and it has nothing to do with their level of development. In urban areas Muslims are mostly found in marginal areas, slums and ghettoized communities without any substantial improvements in educational attainments, occupational mobility and standard of living. Poverty among Muslims in urban areas was twice the national average in 2011-12 and four times more than among upper caste Hindus (Mukherjee 2014).

The negative experience of community members in getting jobs has delinked education with earning better livelihood thereby continuing the cycle of low investment on education, high dropout, low educational achievement and consequently unemployment or self employment, lower income and poverty. Lack of appropriate education, poverty, alienation and communal politics have affected the psyche of the Muslim community, specifically younger generation, who are more worried about their survival and constitutional rights than future aspirations (Shaban 2016). The higher levels of poverty among Muslims can be attributed to their employment in unskilled or semi-skilled activities which in turn is related to lower levels of education and high dropout rate among Muslim community. The level of education which provides good employment opportunities along with high income and standard of living is found to be very low or insignificant among Muslims hence accentuating their lower representation at higher levels of employment.

#### **Pattern of Education among Muslims:**

The Muslims have low literacy (59 per cent) as compared to national average (65 per cent). The low rate of enrolment and high dropout rate (25 percent) among Muslims is a cause of concern. This was attributed to absence of schools in Muslim concentrated areas, low or poor quality of schools and abject poverty preventing access to good schools. This low level of education is reflected in higher education, where only 16 per cent of Muslims are pursuing higher education. The representation of Muslims in engineering and medical is less than 2 per cent. In terms of employment, relatively high share of Muslims (61 per cent) are engaged in self-employment activities, and their share in regular jobs is much below their share in population. The participation of Muslims in salaried jobs (both public and private sectors) is only about 13 per cent. In most of the departments and PSUs, the share of Muslim workers does not exceed 5 per cent. Overall, the presence of Muslims in employment guaranting

regular source of income and respectable position is much below their share in total population (GOI 2006).

The NSSO 2007-08 education round confirmed higher proportion of illiterates among Muslims. The proportion of illiterates among Muslim males is at par with the SCs, STs and higher than the OBCs. Muslim women (47.3%) count amongst the most illiterate segments of the society, their status comparable only with SC/ST (53.2%) women. In terms of levels of educational attainment, nearly one fourth (23.1%) of all Muslim males and one fifth (20.1%) of females were merely literate. A substantial proportion of this male (18%) and female (15.4%) had attained only primary education meanwhile, at the highest levels of education, upper primary and above, Muslim proportion was significantly lower than that among all other SRCs including SCs, STs and OBCs (Fazal 2013). The disparity in educational attainment at higher levels is reflected in the employment situation especially, quality of employment. Low level of education combined with lack of opportunities has slowly and steadily pushed the Muslim community to the lowest rungs of development resulting in widespread marginalization and exclusion of Muslims. The lower representation in salaried jobs both in rural and urban areas has resulted in over representation of Muslims' in self employment activities (Pandya 2010).

The educational backwardness of Muslims is at root of every problem, which Indian Muslims are facing. The declining trends in education are due to important reasons; a few Muslim children are joining, a large number are dropping out. The lack of financial resources has impinged upon the quality, quantity of schools, hostels playground, libraries, science laboratory apparatus and equipments, trained teachers etc. (Shirvani,1984). There has been increasing numbers of drop out as the students go up further in classes due to financial factors like inability of parents to provide money for further education or requirement of child to assist in the earnings of family. The financial constraints have forced majority of Muslim parents to take their children out of learning process. After primary school, there is an alarming drop in the educational achievement of Muslim students. The percentage of Muslim drops to 11.3 % at the level of middle school. Only 4.2% is recorded for Muslims at the higher secondary level and 3.1% at graduation and above levels (GoM,2013).

Higher education generally opens up vistas of opportunities for different trades, practices and professions. The success in higher education brings a step closer of economic security and well being. However, the higher level of dropouts at higher levels of education amongst the Muslims has affected their employment opportunities. The TISS survey found only 2.2 per cent to be graduates and above. Among the graduates, 1.9 per cent belonged to humanities, Arts and Commerce; only 0.5 per cent belonged to science, engineering and technology. Only 1 per cent of the total sample had post graduation degree. (Shaban, 2011).

The Muslim community is confronted with high level of illiteracy along with higher dropout rate at the elementary stage which is reflected in their low quality of economic opportunities and consequently low standard of living. High incidence of poverty is all pervasive among Muslims due to illiteracy, low income and irregular employment thereby reflecting a poor human development status (Pervez 2011).

It is important to note that at very initial stages of education the attitude and conditions of Muslim community determines the destiny of their childrens. The age of discontinuation is lower among Muslims (14 years) as compared to other minority religious groups (17 years). A higher per cent of Muslims i.e. about 30 per cent in rural and 25 per cent in urban areas discontinued education owing to financial constraints as compared to other groups (Singh,2011). There is significant drop out of Muslims from educational institutions after primary level of education. The primary reason for male Muslims is monetary (48 per cent) and among female is marriage (24 per cent) followed by monetary (21 per cent). In terms of higher educational achievement the performance of Muslims in the state is dismal. As compared to 24 per cent of male and 20 per cent of females among Christian,Sikh,Jain and Zorastrian in rural area who have completed higher education, the corresponding rate for Muslim male and female in less than 2 per cent. While in urban areas, the higher educational achievement rate for Muslim male (13 %) and female (8%) as compared other minority religious group males (21%) and females (25%). The per cent of currently not attending and not enrolled was higher among Muslims as compared to Hindu's. Nearly 54 per cent of Muslim male and female reported not enrolled (Singh 2011).

### **Conclusion:**

Data available from different sample surveys conducted in different parts of the country reveal that socio-economic status of Muslims is among one of the lowest among all communities. The low priority given to education and high dropout rates make Muslims educationally most backward as compared to other socio-religious communities. The low level of educational representation and achievement is reflected in the economic opportunities available for Muslims. There is over-representation of Muslims in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations impacting their income thereby depriving them of many life chances. Similarly, the low representation of Muslims in sectors providing assured income has not only impacted their living standard, but has detrimental consequences for their educational and economic opportunities. Muslims have been generally left out of the developmental process and with time Muslims have become the most backward and marginalized community of India in all walks of life.

### **References:**

Ahmad, Imtiaz.1981. 'Muslim Educational Backwardness: An Inferential Analysis', Economic and Political Weekly, 16(36): 1457-1465.

Basant R. and Sharif, A.2010. Handbook of Muslims in India: Empirical and Policy Perspectives. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Census of India.2011. Provisional Population Tables, Register General and Census Commissioner, Government of India.

Government of India.2006. Social, Economic and Educational status of Muslim Community of India: A Report. New Delhi: Prime Minister's High Level Committee. (Sachar Committee)

Government of India.2013. Report of Post Sachchar Evaluation Committee. New Delhi: Ministry of Minority Affairs. (Kundu Committee)

Government of Maharashtra .2013. Socio-Economic and Educational Backwardness of Muslims in Maharashtra. A Report. Mumbai: Chief Minister's Study Group.

Fazal, T.2013. Millennium Development Goals and Muslims of India accessed at <http://www.oxfamindia.org/sites/default/files/> on 13/3/2014.

Hasan, Mushirul.1997. Legacy of a Divided Nation. New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Mukherjee, Sanjeeb.2014. 'Unemployment, poverty rates high among Muslims', accessed at <http://www.buisness-standard.com/article/economy-policy/unemployment-poverty-rates-high> on 3/08/2016.

Pandya, Amit.2010.Muslim Indians: Struggle for Inclusion, H.L.Stimson Center,Washigton, DC.

Shaban, Abdul.2016. 'Muslim Girls in Urdu medium schools of Maharashtra: Progress, retention and aspirations', Economic and Political Weekly, 51(25):65-70.

Shaban, Abdul.2011. Socio-economic and Educational status of Muslims in Maharashtra. Mumbai: Maharashtra State Minorities Commission.

Sharif, Abusaleh and Mehtab Azam.2004. Economic Empowerment of Muslims in India. Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi.

Singh, D.P.2011. Demographic, Socio Economic, Educational and Health Status of Muslim Community in the State of Maharashtra. Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

Shirvani, A.R.1984. 'Assessing educational backwardness a right approach', The Radiance, 20(32):73

Zakaria, Rafiq.2004. Understanding the Indian Muslim, Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan